

CITY OF LONG BEACH 2000-2005 HOUSING ELEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

A. Community Context

Incorporated in 1888, Long Beach is a progressive urban community of 457,000 residents located in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County. The City is home to the world-renowned Port of Long Beach, a rejuvenated and thriving downtown, major employers, tourist attractions, a State University, and varied residential communities.

Long Beach benefits significantly from strong employment and educational bases. The City's economy is expanding as the region's economic base continues to shift from manufacturing industries to an information-based economy built around higher technology, a more skilled/educated labor force, and venture capital investments.

Long Beach has a very diverse resident population and is a community where no single race or ethnic group is the absolute majority. This is largely because of the Navy's presence, and the influx of foreign immigrants from the 1970s through the present. This diversity is also reflected in age groups, special needs populations, and families. Growing population diversity carries important housing implications, as housing needs and preferences commonly vary by race/ethnicity, and place of origin.

Long Beach offers a range of housing opportunities, varying from single-family homes, moderate-density townhomes, to higher-density condominiums and apartments. Future housing growth will be focused in the downtown, on major transit corridors, and within close proximity to major employment and activity centers. Through the Long Beach Housing Development Company, the City will continue to be active in preserving and creating affordable housing opportunities for its residents.

Although the Long Beach economy has improved from the nation's economic downturn, the improvement has been uneven. Residents in certain areas have high levels of housing overcrowding and overpayment. Economic recovery has

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resulted in a rapid increase in housing prices, placing a burden upon individuals and families of lower income and those with special housing needs. Certain neighborhoods also have a higher proportion of older housing. As housing stock ages, neighborhood preservation and improvement is becoming a significant concern.

Therefore, the City of Long Beach faces several challenges over the 2000-2005 planning period of the Housing Element. These challenges include ensuring the quality and affordability of the housing stock, directing reinvestment in lower income areas of the City, assisting individuals and families with special housing needs, and meeting the needs of a diversifying community. This Housing Element sets forth policies and programs to address these and other identified housing needs.

B. Organization of the Housing Element

The Housing Element is a five-year housing plan extending from 2000 through 2005. The Housing Element identifies policies, programs and objectives that focus on the following issues: 1) conserving and improving existing affordable housing; 2) providing adequate sites for new housing, 3) assisting in the development of affordable housing; 4) removing governmental constraints to housing development; and 5) promoting equal housing opportunities for Long Beach's population.

The Housing Element consists of the following major components:

- An analysis of the City's demographic, household and housing characteristics to identify housing needs (Section 2);
- A review of potential market, governmental, and environmental constraints to meeting the City's identified housing needs (Section 3);
- An evaluation of the land, financial and administrative resources available to address Long Beach's housing needs (Section 4);
- A statement of the Housing Plan to address the City's identified housing needs, including housing goals, policies and programs (Section 5);
- A glossary of terms used in the Element and summary of community comments received at public workshops on the Housing Element (Appendix A & B).

C. Data Sources and Methods

In preparing the Housing Element, various sources of information were consulted. The 1990 Census provides the basis for population and household characteristics. Although dated, the Census is the most comprehensive and widely accepted source of information on demographic characteristics. In addition, the 1990 Census is used in the Housing Element to ensure consistency with state and federal housing plans.

However, to ensure that the 2000-2005 Housing Element provides as timely information as possible to facilitate planning purposes, several information

sources are used to provide reliable updates of the 1990 Census. These are as follows:

- Demographic data is updated by the State Department of Finance and the County of Los Angeles Urban Research Division as of 1998.
- Housing market data is updated by obtaining current rents and homes sale prices through surveys and property tax assessor's files as of 1999.
- Service agencies are consulted for program information to provide information on the nature and magnitude of service needs as of 1999.
- Lending patterns are analyzed from financial institutions based on an analysis of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data as of 1998.

D. Public Participation

Opportunities for residents to identify community housing needs, recommend strategies, and comment on the City's Housing Element are integral to a successful element. Participation was solicited through the local newspaper, flyers distributed by the City's six Community Planners at meetings with local community groups, and through regular updates and postings on the City's web site. Furthermore, 152 neighborhood and citywide organizations were direct mailed notices regarding the workshops. Therefore, significant public noticing was accomplished for the Housing Element.

Numerous groups representing the community participated in various aspects of updating the 2000-2005 Housing Element at the community workshops. A sample of participating groups include the following: Carmelitos (Public Housing) Tenants Association, Long Beach Central Area Association, Empower Long Beach Coordinating Council, Central Long Beach Business Association, Long Beach Area Coalition for the Homeless, Disabled Resource Center, Long Beach Affordable Housing Coalition, Foundation for Independent Living, National Association for the Mentally Ill, and the Legal Aid Foundation to mention a few.

During the Needs Assessment phase, two rounds of community workshops were conducted in different neighborhoods to solicit input. A Housing Needs

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Questionnaire was distributed during the meetings, and to neighborhood organizations. Approximately 350 surveys were completed. This community input has been reflected in the Element's policies and programs. A summary of each community meeting is contained in Appendix B and a detailed tabulation of the Needs Survey is available at City Hall in the Advanced Planning Division (5th Floor). As a result of these efforts, the following themes arose on priority housing needs and programs:

Housing Needs	Housing Programs
Overcrowding/density issues	Housing/neighborhood revitalization
Housing/neighborhood conditions	Residential code enforcement
Need for homeownership opportunities	New affordable/accessibile housing
Need for affordable/accessibile housing	Homeowner/renter assistance

Upon completion of the draft 2000-2005 Housing Element, the Planning Commission, Housing Authority, Housing Development Company, Redevelopment Agency, Disability Commission, and City Council conducted study sessions. Participants at the prior community meetings were notified of each meeting. The Draft Element was then submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development for comment.

After HCD reviewed the draft Housing Element, public hearings were held before the Planning Commission and the City Council. Notice was published in the local newspaper in advance of each hearing and copies of the draft Element were available for public review at City Hall and the libraries. After the City Council adopted the Housing Element, the Housing Element was circulated to the California Coastal Commission for their review and certification.

E. Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The 2000-2005 Housing Element is Chapter 3 of the Long Beach General Plan. The General Plan consists of the following nine elements or chapters: 1) Land Use; 2) Transportation; 3) Housing; 4) Open Space; 5) Conservation; 6) Noise; 7) Safety; 8) Seismic Safety; and 9) Air Quality. This Housing Element builds upon the other General Plan elements and the policies and programs set forth remain consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives set forth by the Long Beach General Plan.

At this time, the revised Element does not propose significant change to any other element of the City's adopted General Plan. However, if it becomes apparent that over time changes to any element are needed for internal consistency, such changes will be proposed for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. The City also intends to undertake an integrated update of its Land Use, Transportation and Housing Element upon release of the 2000 Census data (approximately 2002), ensuring consistency and close integration among these key General Plan elements.

F. Relationship to Strategic Plan

The goals, policies and programs contained in the 2000-2005 Housing Element as well as the other aforementioned Elements of the General Plan are derived from several key documents. In preparing the new Citywide Strategic Plan, the "Community Scan" was conducted in 1997 to determine the key issues and concerns of area residents, businesses, and community groups. The Strategic Plan incorporated the Community Scan input and set forth the following issues as reflected in the Housing Plan Section.

- Build a strong network of healthy neighborhoods in Long Beach;
- Strengthen community leadership, collaboration and stewardship and increase public participation;
- Create healthy neighborhoods where diversity is celebrated, arts and cultural programs flourish, services are accessible, and all people have tools to improve the quality of their lives;

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- Support neighborhood efforts to create beauty and pride by removing blight and providing high-quality and well-maintained public infrastructure, parks and public facilities in each neighborhood; and
- Improve the quality and availability of neighborhood housing by addressing declining homeownership, neighborhood stability, and overcrowding.